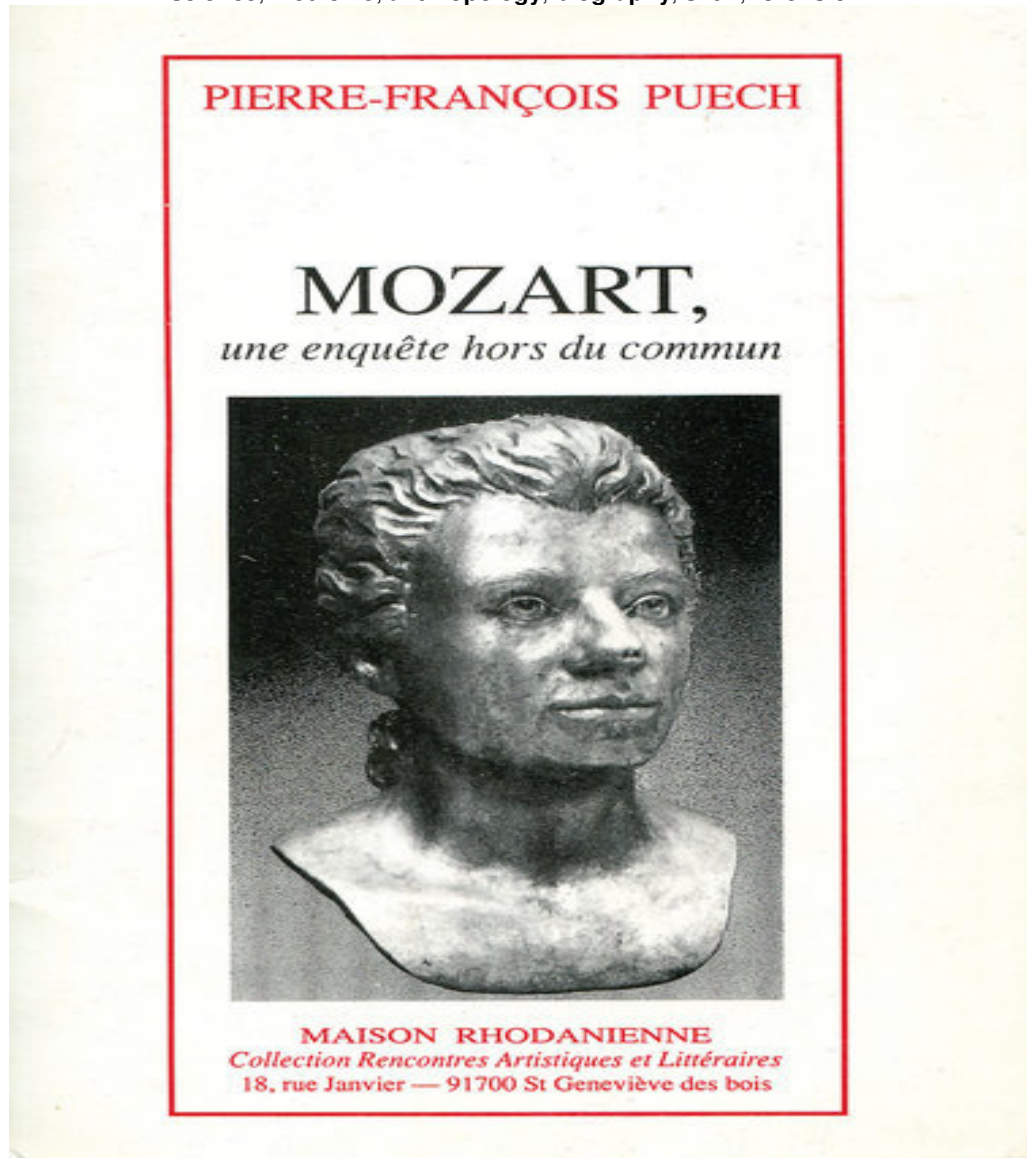


Individual Characteristics of Mozart's Skull

Pierre-Francois PUECH and Bernard PUECH

A forensic team has established that Mozart's skull, owned by the museum in Salzburg, shows unmistakable individual characteristics, comparable to those of fingerprints, that give evidence for the identity of the skull.

science, medicine, anthropology, biography, skull, forensic



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Mozart's Death: Murder, Accident or Disease?

The BBC at- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A1304957>

part 2. Accident

A couple of investigators have surprisingly broken from the norm of attributing Mozart's death to murder and strange ailments by announcing that Mozart died from complications arising from accidents. The first to push this story was French

anthropologist Pierre-Francois Puech, who claimed to have positively identified a skull at Salzburg's Mozarteum to be that of Mozart. Puech drew attention to a fracture in the skull, claiming that it had been sustained from one of Mozart's many falls in 1791, and that it had caused a chronic bruising that had eventually put Mozart in a coma and killed him. The skull was supposed to have been rescued by a gravedigger named Joseph Rothmayer during the reorganisation of the composer's grave, who later gave it to the Salzburg Mozarteum.

Three years later, the American physician Niles E. Drake concurred with Puech's theory in an article that was published in the journal *BioScience*. This theory would indeed help explain why Mozart was depressed and dizzy not long before his death. The obvious problem with this theory is that there is still no consensus as to whether the skull actually belonged to Mozart. Rothmayer had allegedly wrapped wire around the neck of Mozart's corpse before burying it, and had retrieved the skull ten years later when it was exhumed. Research had concluded that the skull belonged to a 20-40 year old South German male who suffered a developmental abnormality called premature synopsis of the metopic suture (PSMS). This abnormality is characterized by the bone of the forehead developing in two halves, and the failure of the metopic suture to close after birth, resulting in a broad midface and a small, abnormally-shaped skull.

As Mozart's portraits depicted a straight, vertical forehead, bulbous nose, prominent cheekbones and upper lip, and prominent brow arches, it was supposed that the skull did indeed belong to him. Further research involving the superimposition of a photograph of the cranium of the skull on portraits of Mozart painted between 1778 and 1788 indicated conformity with all side proportions of the head. However, Nova Scotian neurologist Professor TJ Murray, who founded the Dalhousie Society for the History of Medicine, denied that the skull was that of Mozart as seen in portraits. Walter Brauneis, archivist of the Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments in Austria, undertook to carry out his own research by locating official medical records concerning Mozart's death. Surprisingly he found a doctor's description of the body, which noted that Mozart (the dentist's worst nightmare!) had only seven teeth remaining in his mouth (the rest having rotted or fallen out)! When the Mozarteum skull was re-examined, it was found to have four more teeth than had been recorded by the doctor. Puech supporters countered that the doctor probably counted only the healthy teeth. Puech Pierre Francois (pfpuech@yahoo.fr)add: The only way to be sure just whose skull was to perform DNA analysis on the skull; unfortunately, many of Mozart's children died childless, and his parents' grave has been disturbed so was not able to give an answer. DNA analysis of the "Mozart" skull confirmed that it was masculine, or it was on the simple assertion that the skull dimensions where feminine that the Mozarteum rejected the forensic anthropological studies that gives a positive identification. There is no more objections to the identification of the skull. PS for the supposed wrong number of teeth, a simple photo gives evidence that the 4 incisive crowns are broken off and there presence can or can't be counted.

Pierre Francois Puech, H.D.R. adds Precisions: The mandible was lost and the skull has 15 teeth, 4 of them broken at the neck. If Mozart's upper maxillary had 11 teeth, as counted after the time of death (per a medical certificate discovered by Walter Brauneis), it is because the crowns of the four upper incisors are broken off. Two children of Mozart survived and 4 died in infancy. The younger son surviving, Franz X. Wolfgang, died on 29 July 1844 in Karlsbad where he was buried. His tomb, the only one known for the children, was moved ten years later to a different cemetery of the town. It has been reported that the body is now missing (1,2).

1. Puech PF, Puech B, Tichy G. Identification of the cranium of W.A. Mozart. Forensic Sci Int. 1989 April-May;41(1-2):101-102.

2. Dr. Walther Parson, 2006. Army helps DNA scientists unravel Mozart mystery. Accessed at http://www.scienceblog.com/cms/army_helps_dna_scientists_unravel_mozart_mystery

3. Puech PF. Forensic scientists uncovering Mozart .Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine June 1991, Volume 84: 387.
<http://ukpmc.ac.uk/picrender.cgi?artid=522858&blobtype=pdf>

A forensic team has established that Mozart's skull, owned by the museum in Salzburg, shows unmistakable individual characteristics, comparable to those of fingerprints, that give evidence for the identity of the skull. More details on

<http://www.independent.academia.edu/pfpuech/Papers>

These references in PubMed complete the list of references concerning this article.

1- Puech PF, Puech B, Tichy G. Identification of the cranium of W.A. Mozart. Forensic Sci Int. 1989 Apr May;41:101-110. [PubMed]

2- Puech B, Puech PF, Tichy G, Dhellemmes P, Cianfarani F. Craniofacial dysmorphism in Mozart's skull. J Forensic Sci. 1989 Mar;34:487-490. [PubMed]

3- Puech B, Puech PF, Dhellemmes P, Pellerin P, Lepoutre F, Tichy G. Did Mozart have a chronic extradural haematoma? Injury. 1989 Nov;20:327-330. [PubMed]

Also important, the face of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has been reconstructed forensically, providing an authentic portrait. The head is short, with a vertical forehead, the middle face juts forward. and the cheekbones are prominent. A poor bone rim protection of the eyes gives to the face a feminine appearance.

1- Puech P-F. Mozart identifie. Pour la Science 1989;138:8-9.

2- Puech P-F. Mozart reconstruit. Pour la Science 1990;149:26-27.